

# Exercise improves heart function in diabetes, while diet reverses the condition, finds study

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A new study has shown that exercise may be the best way to improve heart function in adults with type 2 diabetes – but a specialized diet can reverse the condition.

Heart failure is a common complication of diabetes, and signs of future trouble can show up as changes to heart function in younger adults. Investigators compared the impact of supervised aerobic exercise and a low-energy meal replacement program on heart function in 87 patients ages 18 to 65 with the disease.

Participants underwent echocardiography and magnetic resonance imaging to confirm early heart dysfunction, and exercise tests to measure cardiovascular fitness.

Significant improvements in heart function were found in exercise program participants when compared with a control group. These patients also had an increase in exercise capacity. In contrast, the low energy diet did not improve heart function, but the intervention certainly wasn't a total loss. Patients in the diet group not only had "favorable"

changes to heart structure and vascular function, but 83% in this cohort experienced a reversal of their diabetes, reported Prof. Gerry McCann, from the University of Leicester, United Kingdom.

“It may seem obvious, but if we can empower patients with type 2 diabetes to make changes to their daily routines through exercise and healthy eating, we may help them reduce the risk of heart failure and even early death,” McCann concluded.

Full findings were published in *Diabetes Care*.